



## Early Journal Content on JSTOR, Free to Anyone in the World

This article is one of nearly 500,000 scholarly works digitized and made freely available to everyone in the world by JSTOR.

Known as the Early Journal Content, this set of works include research articles, news, letters, and other writings published in more than 200 of the oldest leading academic journals. The works date from the mid-seventeenth to the early twentieth centuries.

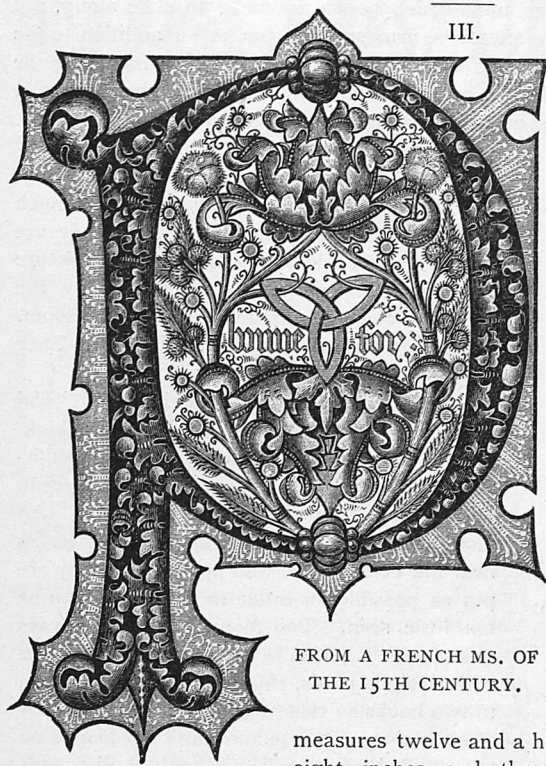
We encourage people to read and share the Early Journal Content openly and to tell others that this resource exists. People may post this content online or redistribute in any way for non-commercial purposes.

Read more about Early Journal Content at <http://about.jstor.org/participate-jstor/individuals/early-journal-content>.

JSTOR is a digital library of academic journals, books, and primary source objects. JSTOR helps people discover, use, and build upon a wide range of content through a powerful research and teaching platform, and preserves this content for future generations. JSTOR is part of ITHAKA, a not-for-profit organization that also includes Ithaka S+R and Portico. For more information about JSTOR, please contact [support@jstor.org](mailto:support@jstor.org).

## THE ART OF ILLUMINATION.

III.



FROM A FRENCH MS. OF THE 15TH CENTURY.

SINCE CHARLES of Viana, son of John II., King of Navarre, about the middle of the fifteenth century made a translation of the Ethics of Aristotle into Romance, and it is from this beautiful manuscript that our initial is taken. The first paragraph of the title is preceded by a small illuminated letter, and continued in plain capitals of blue and gold alternately. The second follows the P on this page. The letter itself is blue on a burnished gold ground diapered with light yellow; the foliage within of pink, green and orange. The volume

measures twelve and a half inches in height by eight inches and three-quarters in width, is beautifully written on 238 folios of the finest

vellum, and is in an admirable state of preservation.

A remarkable manuscript in the Royal Collection of the British Museum is Queen Mary's Psalter. It is so called from having been presented to her, in 1553. It is written on 320 pages of the finest vellum, and cannot be placed earlier in date than the end of the thirteenth century. About this time a fashion came into vogue of decorating a manuscript by the introduction of colored drawings in the lower margins. Such embellishments run nearly through this curious volume. There are many such fine works to prove there was at this time a very skilful school of English artists who must have devoted much time to the painting of miniatures.

The illustration on the opposite page is taken from a very interesting fourteenth-century manuscript in the Royal Collection of the British Museum, entitled "Epistre au Roy Richard II. d'Angleterre, par un Solitaire de Célestins de Paris." It contains many small illuminated letters and borders, but only two drawings occupying whole pages. In the first is shown the sacred monogram, in burnished gold, within a panel the field of which is produced on one side with the badge of France, the fleur-de-lis, and on the other with the lion of England. Above the panel are three smaller ones, the centre being occupied with the crown of thorns, from which proceed rays of glory over those of France and England, which fill those on each side of it. The whole is surrounded with a rich and elaborate border. On the opposite page appears the subject of our engraving. The monk on his left knee, with a banner in his left hand charged with the symbol of the lamb, is presenting with his right hand his book to King Richard, who is seated in his robes of state, crowned, and with his sceptre in his left hand. The three principal figures on the right of the king are supposed to be his uncles, the Dukes of Lancaster, York, and Gloucester. The hair of these noblemen is bound by jewelled circlets round the forehead. This group is an instance of the grotesque, whimsical, and extravagant style of dress which prevailed at this time. One of the figures has a long flowing dress, while that of another is cut short at the hip to show his parti-colored pantaloons, one leg of which is white and the other gray. They all have shoes with the enormously long toes, called "crackowes," so named, according to Mr. Planché, from the city of Cracow; Poland and Bohemia having been incorporated by John, the grandfather

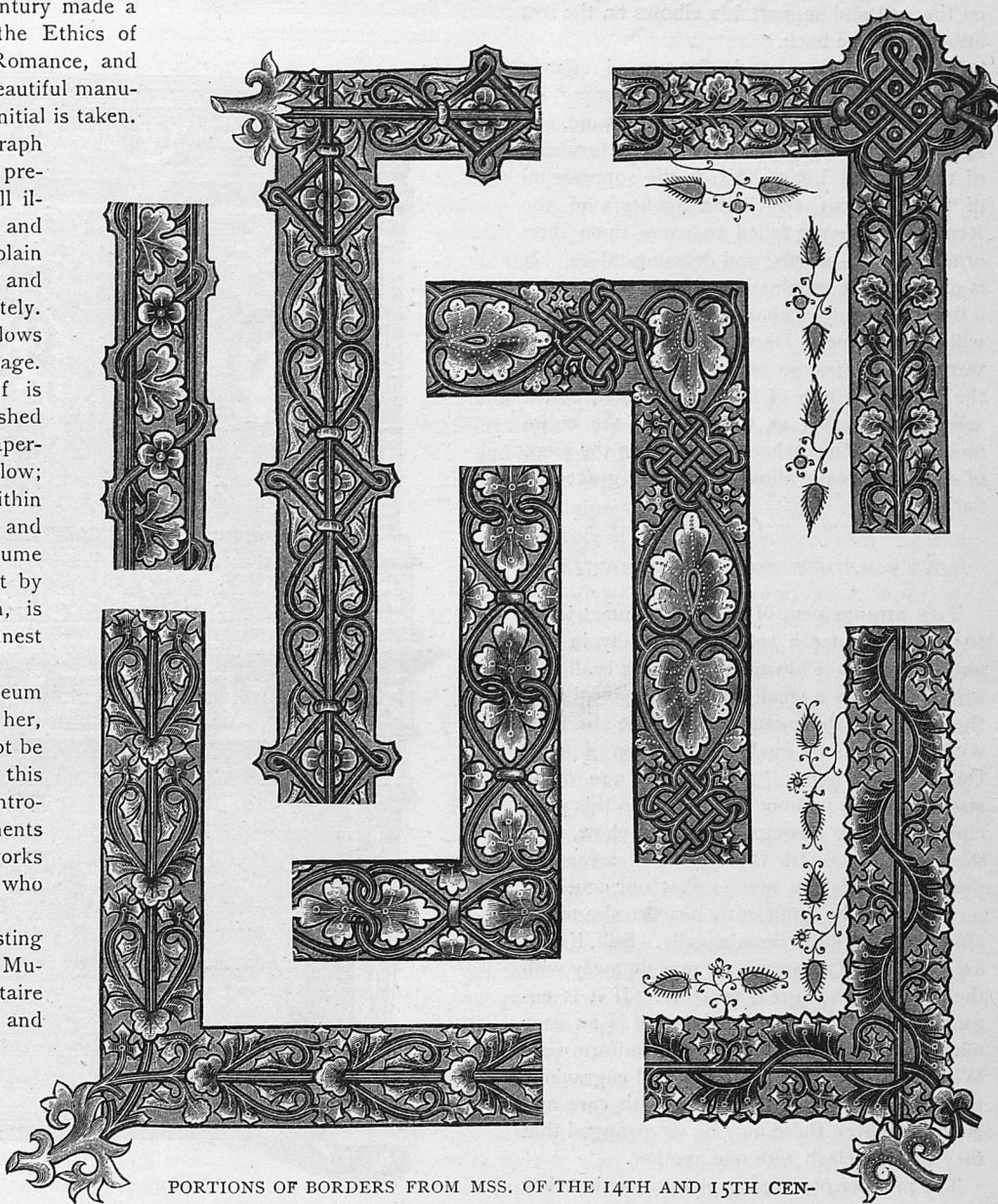


PORTION OF A BORDER FROM A MANUSCRIPT OF THE 15TH CENTURY IN THE BODLEIAN LIBRARY.

of Richard's queen, and the fashion probably was imported thence. They were compared to devil's claws by a contemporary writer, who says that they were fastened to the knees with chains of gold and silver.

About this time the borders surrounding the leading pictures and the text began to be altered in form, from being actual and symmetrical frames to that established

proportion of margin which still exists in the making up the pages of printed books; that is, to make the outer margins and bottoms of the pages considerably wider than the space allowed to the inner margin and the top. The bottoms are generally the widest; and in volumes prepared for distinguished individuals that space was commonly occupied on the first leaf with their arms, badges, and various devices. When the illuminators of this age had exhausted their



PORTIONS OF BORDERS FROM MSS. OF THE 14TH AND 15TH CENTURIES IN THE BRITISH MUSEUM AND BODLEIAN LIBRARY.

inventive faculties by the making and mixing of monsters with every created being suited to their purpose, and caricature, frequently sadly destitute of refinement, reigned triumphant, even on the margins of sacred volumes, a new mode of decorating these margins came

into fashion, and continued to prevail during the greater part of the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries. These borders were called ivy-leaf patterns, from conventional imitations of those simple and beautiful leaves forming a leading feature in these sparkling and lace-like designs.

The engravings given herewith of borders from various manuscripts, some in the British Museum, and others in the Bodleian Library, are sufficient to illustrate the general peculiarities of this mode of treatment. They are all on burnished gold grounds, and the details are of green, red, orange, and blue. In one example the leaves are parti-colored, orange on the one side and blue on the other. In the border illustrated on the left of this page, the roses and violets are red and blue, and the leaves green and gold.

The most simple examples of this style of composition show the text enclosed on the sides and lower margin with a continuous stem, formed of red and blue, or either of these colors, with one of burnished gold.

These were divided and bounded by strong black lines, the colors being made distinct by a fine thread of white passing along their centres. Sometimes from the extremities, and at others from the middle of these bands, proceeded a series of scrolls, interlacing each other in the most graceful manner in single delicate lines of dark brown color. Along these lines were thrown out leaves, which in some instances were of burnished gold, in others of gold,

blue, and red, alternately, while they were further enriched by little spiral tendrils appearing between them.

The more open spaces were filled with studs of burnished gold, made star-like by fine lines radiating from the bold ones in which they were enclosed. In more costly volumes the text was frequently confined within richly colored bands of filigree and



leaves, or interlaced foliage, from which proceeded the outer scrolls, and occasionally the latter were of color within two delicate black lines. These were often enriched with gayly plumaged birds. The details, however, of this style of decoration are so various that we can only point out its leading features.

Manuscripts of the fourteenth century show a great advance in painting over previous works of a similar kind. Artists were no longer satisfied to leave their heads in little more than outline, and to copy each other in the same conventional method of composition and treatment. We now find in their works a considerable range of invention, and satisfactory evidence that the finest miniatures of the time were taken from living models and finished with the greatest care.

A certain amount of stiffness and want of variety in grouping still prevailed, and architectural embellishments, though admirable for the precision of their details, were still faulty with regard to perspective; and the very Chinese-like modes of representing rocks, trees, and other features of their landscape, afford convincing proofs that no Claudes or Turners had yet appeared to delight either the pious or the worldly-minded.

Toward the middle of this century French art arrived at a very high, if not the very highest, position. In the Bibliothèque Nationale, the Musée d'Artillerie, and other libraries in Paris, many splendid examples remain to prove this great excellence. One of the finest is generally known as "The Great Hours of Jean, Duc de Berri," and one of the most interesting pages of this remarkable manuscript has been admirably reproduced in the "Paléographie Universelle, par M. Silvestre."

Among many exquisite illuminations of the latter half of this century, found in the British Museum, are those in a volume containing the Psalter and other offices, executed for Margaret of Bavaria, the wife of John, Duke of Burgundy, who was married in 1385 and died in 1419.

It is a small folio consisting of 453 leaves of fine uterine vellum, and had originally several pictures occupying whole pages, but only one now remains, an Ascension. The lower part of the body of Jesus is alone seen, surrounded with clouds, his feet being supported by seven angels. The apostles, with the two Marys, are grouped on the left side of the picture, while the disciples are advancing from the portal of a building on the right. The towers of a castle rise abruptly from a mass of rocks over the heads of the disciples and apostles.

The space between these rocks and buildings and the clouds under the feet of Jesus is covered with an exceedingly minute diaper of squares, ruled in with black lines, and filled alternately with blue color and burnished gold; the color being made lively by exceedingly fine and solid lines of white, and the gold to sparkle by each square being punctured with a fine point. This picture is enclosed within a remarkably elaborate ivy-leaf pattern, the gold leaves of which are also punctured to give them brilliancy, having bands of conventional clouds running along their centres, on which are supported angels playing musical instruments; and on the lower margin

is a most delicately-painted sitting figure of the duchess, her hands resting on shields charged with the arms of herself and husband.

Beside the large drawing of the Ascension there are sixty-one small ones incorporated in the text. These are by different hands, but all of great merit. Many of them are unsurpassed in beauty of design or refinement, and delicacy of execution.

From the early part of the fifteenth century the art of miniature painting began to decline in England, and the finest illuminated works now in that country from that time forward are by foreign painters, chiefly French and Flemish. One of the few exceptions is a volume of poems in the British Museum. It is a translation of the legends of St. Edmund and St. Fremund into English verse from the Latin. It was composed and written by order of William Curteys, abbot of the monastery of St. Edmundsbury, on the occasion of King Henry VI.'s visit to that monastery in the year 1435. It contains a very interesting and carefully painted picture of the

poet presenting his poem to the king, and little doubt can be entertained that they are truthful portraits.

It is neatly and most delicately written, and contains no less than 125 miniatures, executed in a peculiar and effective manner, with numerous borders and initials of a graceful and original character.

One of the best known works in the British Museum of the early part of the fifteenth century is the celebrated Bedford Missal. This volume was prepared for John, Duke of Bedford, son of Henry IV. of England and Regent of France, and his wife Ann, daughter of John, Duke of Burgundy, married A.D. 1423. It contains most elaborate and delicately finished miniatures of the duke and duchess, the former being highly interesting as the only known portrait of the duke. It was presented by the duchess, with her husband's consent, to Henry VI. of England, on Christmas Eve, 1430. The following subjects occupy full pages: the Creation; the building of the Ark; the Abatement of the Flood, with Noah Sacrificing; and the Destruction of the Tower of Babel. Deep borders of filigree and flower pattern, in which appear medallions filled with smaller miniatures, enclose all the other pages. The figure illustrations of this remarkable volume have been attributed to the three Van Eycks, without the slightest authority. They are evidently of French, and not of

Flemish art; and, with the exception of the portraits, and a few of the lesser subjects, this manuscript is remarkable for the prodigious number, rather than for any unusual refinement, either of the ornamental portion of the borders, or the miniatures enclosed in them.

Of a much higher character of art is the little manuscript called the Prayer-Book of Henry VI., also of French origin, in the Cotton collection of the British Museum. It consists of 286 leaves, and is enriched with 14 highly finished pictures, in six of which the infant king is represented on his knees in the act of devotion. In every instance he is crowned, and wears a surcoat, on which are embroidered the arms of England and France. It was probably presented to him at his coronation.



ILLUMINATED PAGE FROM A FRENCH "EPISTLE TO KING RICHARD II. OF ENGLAND."

IN THE BRITISH MUSEUM.